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Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SPC-03 SAM-01 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10

RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02

COME-00 INT-08 SCI-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 FEA-02 L-03 DRC-01 /144 W
---------- 078581
R 010831Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 312
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 2752

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, EGEN, PFOR, ID, MY, SN, TH, JA
SUBJECT: ASEAN-JAPAN EXPERTS MEETING ON SYNETHETIC RUBBER

REF: JAKARTA 1649

1. ON FEBRUARY 28 EMBOFF MET SAIKI, HEAD, REGIONAL POLICY DIVISION, ASIAN AFFAIRS BUREAU, FONOFF, TO REVIEW RECENT ASEAN-JAPAN TALKS ON SYNTHETIC RUBBER. SAIKI, WHO ATTENDED TALKS AS MEMBER OF JAPAN'S DELEGATION, PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT:

2. AT MEETING GOJ APPROACH WAS TO EMPHASIZE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON FACTS OF SITUATION, AS THIS FIRST NECESSARY STEP TOWARD SETTLEMENT OF PROBLEM. ASEAN SIDE, IN GOJ VIEW, WAS ANXIOUS THAT MEETING PRODUCE SOME TANGIBLE RESULTS FOR PRESENTATION TO FORTHCOMING ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING, BUT GOJ DECLINED TO BE RUSHED INTO COMMITMENTS. SUBSTANCE OF BOTH SIDES' ARGUMENTS WAS ALONG LINES OF EARLIER
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DISCUSSIONS. THOUGH NO AGREEMENTS REACHED AT MEETING,

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DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO SIDES' POSITIONS HAS NOW NARROWED.
AT LEAST UNOFFICIALLY, ASEAN EXPERTS NOW BELIEVE COM-
PETITIVE THREAT POSED TO NATURAL RUBBER NOT AS STRONG
AS FORMERLY FEARED, THOUGH CONCERN DOES REMAIN CONCERNING
POLYISOPRENE. GOJ'S FIRM VIEW, SAID SAIKI, IS THAT
ASEAN HAS NO CAUSE FOR CONCERN EITHER NOW OR IN FUTURE.

3. SAIKI SAID THAT WHEN ISSUE FIRST AROSE IN EARLY 1973,
THERE WAS REAL POSSIBILITY IT WOULD DEVELOP INTO SIGNI-
FICANT POLITICAL PROBLEM BETWEEN JAPAN AND ASEAN COUNTRIES.
ASEAN COUNTRIES' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROBLEM MODERATED FOLLOW-
ING INITIAL GOJ RESPONSE (PRESUMABLY GOJ AIDE MEMOIRE OF
AUGUST 24, 1973, TO ASEAN COUNTRIES), BUT WHETHER PRESENT
MODERATION CONTINUES WILL DEPEND ON ULTIMATE RESULTS OF
DIALOGUE. GOJ HOPES THAT, WITHOUT ACTUALLY REQUIRING
JAPANESE FIRMS TO REDUCE PRODUCTION, IT WILL BE ABLE TO
WORK WITH ASEAN COUNTRIES TO FIND SUITABLE MEASURES (PRE-
SUMABLY WITH HIGH PUBLIC RELATIONS VALUE) WHICH WILL SATISFY
ASEAN COUNTRIES' DESIRE TO SHOW TANGIBLE RESULTS FROM
DIALOGUE.
SHOESMITH

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